

The Scenario

It was time for my Trinovantes and two of my Persian satraps (those of Nottooneariarma and Longawayoff) to take to the battlefield and face each other again. This combination had met back in 2019 (see battle 69) when the Persian combination had a narrow victory.

Since then all three armies had been expanded, especially the Trinovantes, and the Persians had gained some potentially more reliable infantry. The Persians looked the stronger on paper due to the armour – for the cavalry – and the number of bows in their armies, however the Trinovantes had slightly more men and had proved more ferocious in the past.

The 2019 battlefield had been fairly open, which favoured the Persians. This time around, I came up with something that was more akin to a home game for the Trinovantes.

There was no scenario, just a straight forward encounter battle.

The Pitch



A ridge of high ground ran along the left hand flank, with some woods (dense and open) spread across it and along the edge. On the right hand side the ground was largely heath but dropped away in the far corner to a marshy valley before rising into a small area of boggy ground. Some hills and open wood marked the edge between the heath, boggy ground and the open plain. The Trinovantes would approach from the far side.

The Teams

Cunobeline, the Trinovante king, had mustered just over 18,000 of his tribe.

He, escorted by his chariot borne nobles, directly commanded the five warbands of the main clan. These totalled nearly 5,500 warriors and another 4,000 peasants.

One of his sons, Togodumnus, led a mixed force of just under 3,500 men, including the concentration of slingers from the tribe.

Another son, Caratacus, commanded a light force of 900 cavalry and 800 skirmishing foot.

Two allied sub-clans had turned out to support Cunobeline: the Coastal clan under Cartivelios, and the Canonium clan led by Dumnovellanunos. Each clan had mobilised about 1,500 men, mainly in the form of a warband with some supporting troops.

Megabazos, satrap of Nottooneariarma, commanded the Persian side with Xavier, the satrap of Longawayoff, as his reluctant second in command. Their combined force totalled just over 17,500 men.

Megabazos had the larger army. He commanded nearly 2,500 reasonable cavalry and almost 3,000 poor quality infantry as his own satrapal troops.

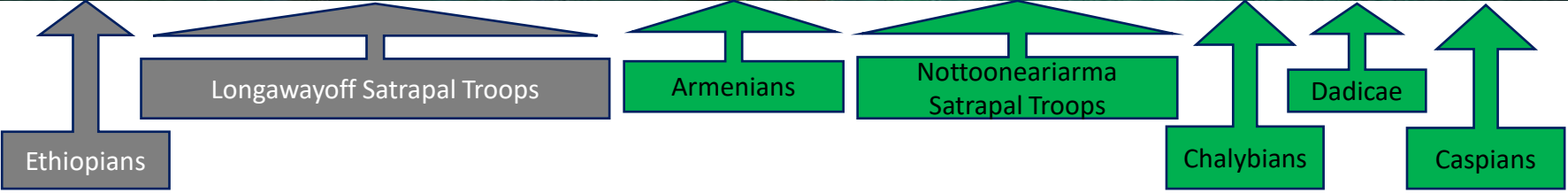
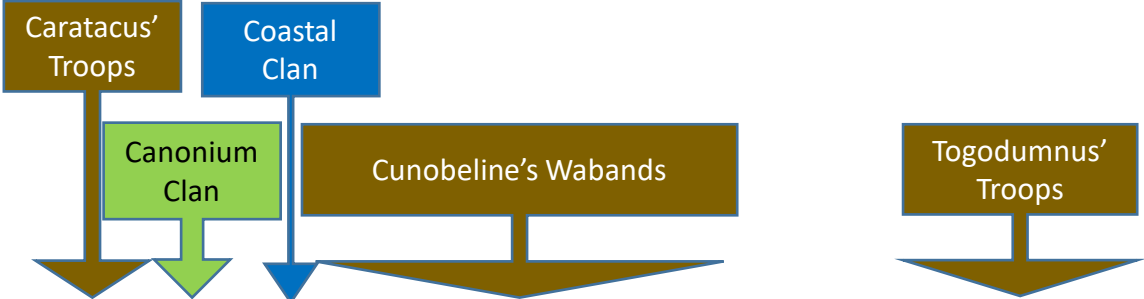
These were supported by four subject allies, each led by their own local commander. These were: 1,000 Caspian bowmen; 1,000 Armenian cavalry and 2,000 foot; 1,000 infantry from the Dadicae, and a similar number from the Chalybians.

Xavier's satrapal forces consisted of 1,000 mixed cavalry, 2,500 reasonable infantry and 1,000 Arab cavalry and camelry.

One of his subject allies, the Ethiopians, had provided 800 light foot armed with bow.

For more details on the compositions of both forces visit the armies page on this site.

The Deployments



The Tactics

Based on experience, Cunobeline had to keep his plan simple and allow for his men to get carried away in excitement.

The gap between the woods was just big enough for his better warbands to deploy and have the weaker two on their flanks in the woods. He would move his infantry to there and hold.

On the right, Dumnovellanunos would take his clan through the gap in the woods along the ridge to distract the enemy on that flank. Caratacus would go further out, using the woods as cover, to provide support if they were attacked. Cartivelios would conceal his men in the dense woods, ready to leap out and either support Dumnovellanunos or hit the enemy in the flank as they closed on Cunobeline's warbands.

Togodumnus was wide on the left in the heath. Initially Cunobeline was going to hold him there for a while, but hearing how few enemy were over that side, he decided that Togodumnus should advance and attack.

Megabazos wanted to make best use of his advantage in bow power and somehow protect his weaker infantry groupings.

All the cavalry would gather in the centre, advance and skirmish with the enemy line. Once they had weakened them and the infantry were coming within charge reach, the cavalry would pull back to the flanks and provide support from there.

Meanwhile, most of the infantry would form a line in the middle and then advance. Hopefully, with the better quality infantry mixed in like this, their overall morale would not falter too early.

The Dadicae, supported by the Caspians, would advance along the hill line on the edge of the heath and delay any enemy on that flank until the cavalry came to support. The Ethiopians would do similar along the ridge on the left.

The Order of Battle

In my rules, each Corps takes its turn in being active and doing something. The order in which they become active is determined by a dice roll at the start of the battle. This sequence is set out below and may help to explain the battle report slides, each of which shows the actions for an individual Corps during a period when it is their turn to be active. Each Division normally occupies a single hex on the battlefield.

- C1 – Dadicae (Nottooneariarma Ally) (1 Division)
- C2 – Coastal Clan (Trinovante Ally) (1 Division)
- C3 – Caspians (Nottooneariarma Ally) (1 Division)
- C4 – Caratacus' Force (2 Divisions)
- C5 – Ethiopians (Longawayoff Ally) (1 Division)
- C6 – Chalybians (Nottooneariarma Ally) (1 Division)
- C7 – Armenians (Nottooneariarm Ally) (3 Divisions)
- C8 – Togodumnus' Troops (3 Divisions)
- C9 – Canonium Clan (Trinovante Ally) (1 Division)
- C10 – Trinovante Warbands (6 Divisions)
- C11 – Longawayoff Troops (4 Divisions)
- C12 – Nottooneariarma Troops (4 Divisions)

Each Corps commander is in the first Division in their Corps. All photographs are taken from the Persian edge.

P1/C1



On the Persian right, Mirza, the Dadicae chieftain, led his men along the crest of the first hill.



P1/C2



On the Trinovante right, Cartivelios and the Coastal clan advanced into the dense wood. Cartivelios sent his light cavalry forward so they could monitor enemy movements.



P1/C3



On the Persian right flank, the Caspian archers, under the command of their chieftain Kawad, moved forward through the heath to support the Dadicae.



P1/C4



On the Trinovante right flank, Caratacus led his cavalry around the wood whilst his infantry advanced into it.



P1/C5



On the Persian left flank, Kashta led his Ethiopian archers up the slope into the wood.



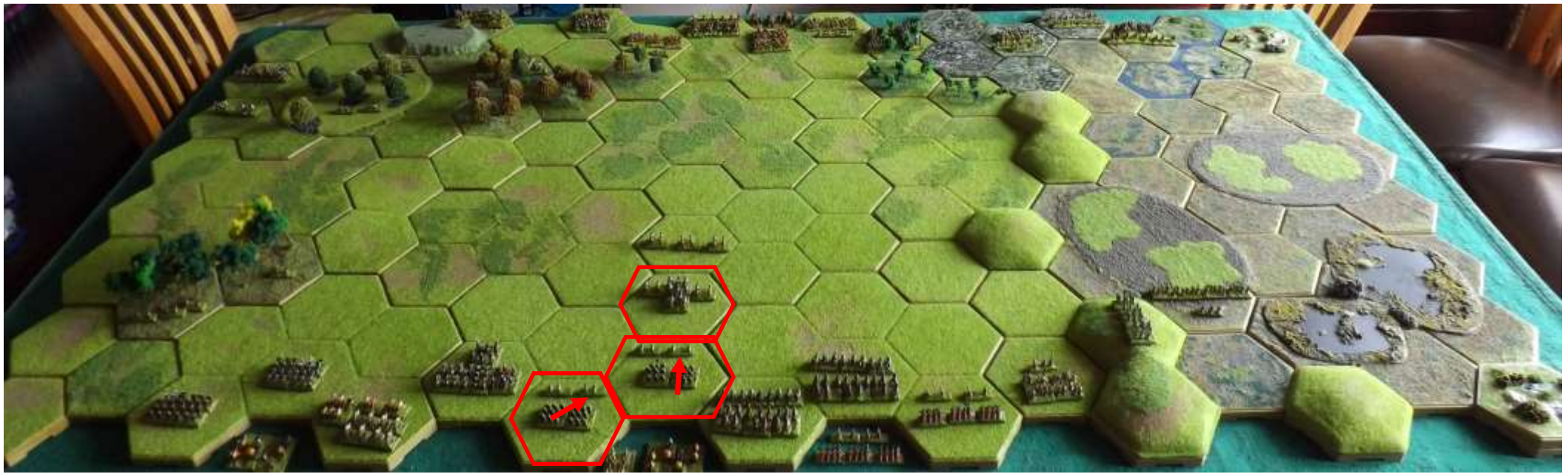
P1/C6



In the shadow of the hill, the Chalybians, led by their king, Saumacus, held their position as they waited for the Persian infantry to their left to start advancing.



P1/C7



In the centre of the Persian line, the Armenians started to advance. It was a bit of a cautious advance, as their chieftain, Artaxias, did not want to isolate his cavalry from any support.



P1/C8



On the Trinovante left flank, Togodumnus and his men started to trudge through the boggy ground, around the marsh and on to the heath.



P1/C9



On the Trinovante right flank,
Dumnovellanunos and the Canonium clan
crossed the rise and started to move
between the two woods.



P1/C10



In the Trinovante centre, the warbands of the main clan started to advance.



P1/C11



On the Persian left, the satrapal troops from longawayoff started to advance. Xavier was also cautious in moving his own cavalry squadrons forward, but did send his Arab cavalry out to scout ahead. His infantry moved in from the flank to join up with the Armenian infantry.



P1/C12



In the Persian centre, the advance of Megabazos' cavalry was more determined. His satrapal infantry started to moved forward too.



P2/C1



On the Persian right, the Dadicae moved forward off the hill and into the heath. With enemy advancing in the distance, Mirza, their chieftain, deployed them ready to shoot.



P2/C2



On the Trinovante right, Cartivelios held the Coastal clan in the dense wood with his light cavalry monitoring enemy movements.



P2/C3



To the right of the Dadicae, the Caspian archers also advanced and their chieftain, Kawad, prepared them to open fire.



P2/C4



On the Trinovante right flank, Caratacus and his men continued their advance.



P2/C5



On the Persian left flank, Kashta could now see the approaching enemy from around and between the woods. Not sure he could handle all these with just his Ethiopian archers, he despatched a message to Xavier suggesting that he send support. Meanwhile, some of his archers opened fire on the approaching enemy cavalry.



P2/C6



With the Persian infantry now moving forward, Saumacus, the Chalybian king, ordered his men to advance.



P2/C7



With the near presence of Megabazos and his cavalry, Artaxias, the Armenian chieftain, made a more positive advance with his cavalry so some of his horse archers could open fire. Behind him, his infantry continued to move towards the Persian infantry.



P2/C8



As the enemy came into sight, Togodumnus decided the situation warranted a general advance and galloped forward with his chariots and cavalry to skirmish with the enemy infantry. Behind him, his own infantry continued to advance.



P2/C9



On the Trinovante right, the Canonium clan advanced between the woods.



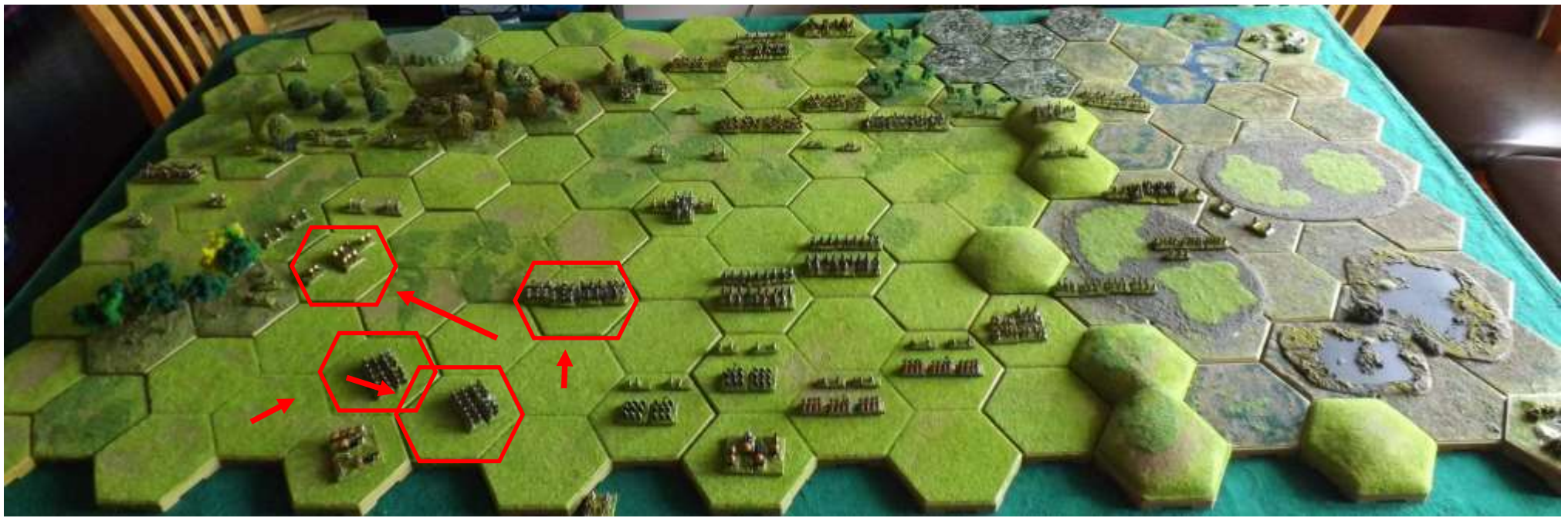
P2/C10



Being too far away to influence them, Cunobeline was unable to stop the three left most warbands in his line from advancing wildly towards the nearest enemy instead of holding the line.



P2/C11



Alerted by Kashta's message to the presence of emerging enemy across the ridge, Xavier despatched his Arab cavalry to support the Ethiopians, whilst he and the rest of his force continued with the existing plan, for now.



P2/C12



Megabazos moved his cavalry forward so that his bow armed troopers could open fire on the advancing enemy infantry. Behind him, his infantry also advanced and one battalion's archers were also able to start shooting.



P3/C1



Mirza continued advancing with his men. Whilst he and his companions focussed their fire on the enemy on top of the hill, his men shot at the enemy cavalry and chariots.



P3/C2



With his scouts advising that the enemy were closing, Cartivelios moved the Coastal clan through the wood to its front edge.



P3/C3



Holding their ground, the Caspian archers returned fire on the enemy cavalry and chariots.



P3/C4



Alerted by their shooting, Caratacus advanced on the enemy in the wood with his cavalry and started to skirmish with them. Meanwhile, his infantry emerged from the larger wood and closed on the camel riders, annoying them with slingshot and javelins.



P3/C5



The missiles from the enemy cavalry had severely weakened the Ethiopians, but Kashta was able to get them to hold their ground and return fire.



P3/C6



The Chalybians advanced on to the hill and were able to see the advancing enemy.



P3/C7



Artaxias held the Armenian cavalry in position so his horse archers could continue to fire. At the rear, the Armenian infantry advanced in line with their Persian colleagues.



P3/C8



Despite the substantial losses to his own cavalry and chariotry, Togodumnus remained in good spirits. He rallied his remaining chariots back to safety whilst his infantry advanced and opened fire on the enemy.



P3/C9



From the gap between the woods, the Canonium clan rushed forward and their slingers and light cavalry fired at the camel riders too.



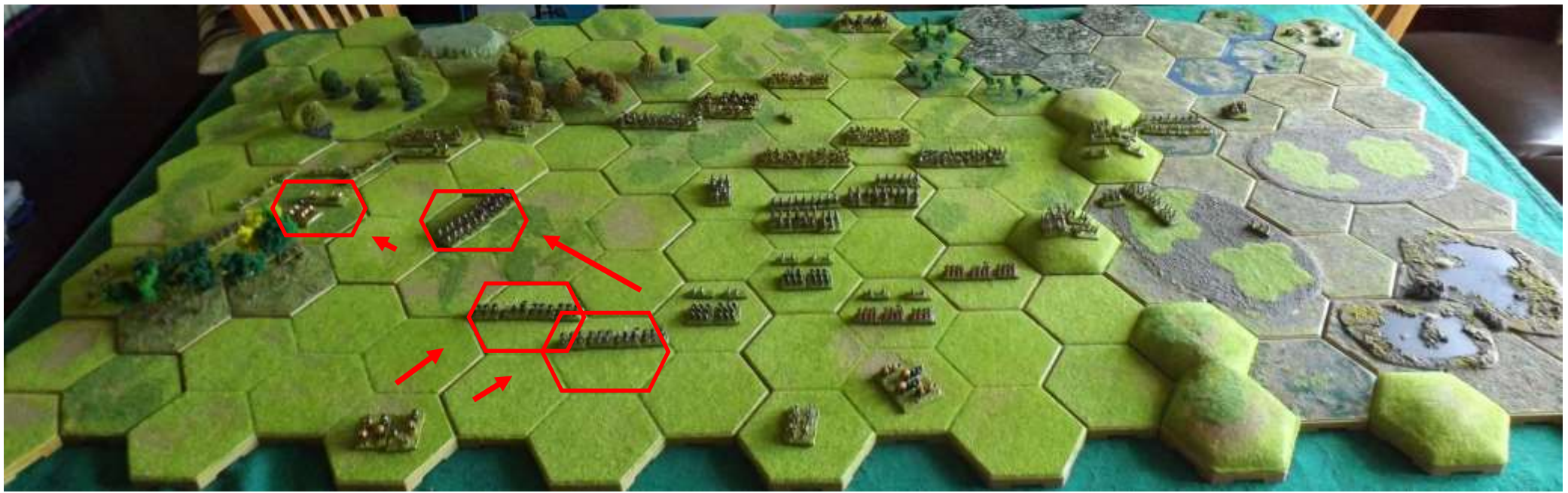
P3/C10



Cunobeline was losing control of his men and the whole line surged forward in a state of wild enthusiasm.



P3/C11



Xavier was concerned about the situation on the left flank. Both the Ethiopians and his Arab cavalry were getting low on numbers. Sending a message to Megabazos, suggesting that the cavalry switch to the left flank, he rode towards it with his own cavalry. Behind him, his infantry were now in line with the Armenian infantry.



P3/C12



Receiving Xavier's message, noting how close the enemy infantry now were, and that the Chalybians and Dadicae seemed to be OK on the right flank, Megabazos agreed that he should move his cavalry to the left and they started to move in that direction. This did mean that his infantry on the right were now in the line of sight of the incoming enemy.



P4/C1



Having caused the enemy cavalry and chariots to retreat, Mirza's Dadicae were in good spirits and he had no trouble in getting them to charge uphill into the enemy infantry. The enemy skirmishers fell back and the Dadicae met the infantry behind them.



P4/C2



The Coastal clan emerged from the wood and started to harass the enemy cavalry in front of them.



P4/C3



The hail of slingshot from the enemy had further weakened the Caspians so that most of them had now dispersed in rout. Kawad, the chieftain, was left with just a few of his followers and decided to pull back to safety.



P4/C4



On the Trinovante right flank, Caratacus had no problems in getting his cavalry to charge the remaining archers in the wood (who all fell or dispersed). His infantry also charged the enemy cavalry they had been skirmishing with.



P4/C6



On the Persian right flank, the Chalybians were keen to get involved and moved forward off the hill. Their king, Saumacus, noted that although the Dadicae to his right were weakened, they had seen off the enemy infantry, bar a few skirmishers. So he was happy to turn his men to the left to face a larger threat.



P4/C7



Now without any horse archers and finding his cavalry being threatened by the advancing enemy, Artaxias followed the lead of Megabazos and moved his cavalry towards the left flank. Meanwhile, his Armenian infantry continued to advance and one group were now getting into charge range of the enemy.



P4/C8



Togodumnus' warband had been destroyed in the melee on the hill, but they had taken a lot of the enemy with them. The remaining skirmishers regrouped and along with the slingers and a returning Togodumnus, started to avenge themselves on the few isolated enemy infantry who soon fell or dispersed in rout.



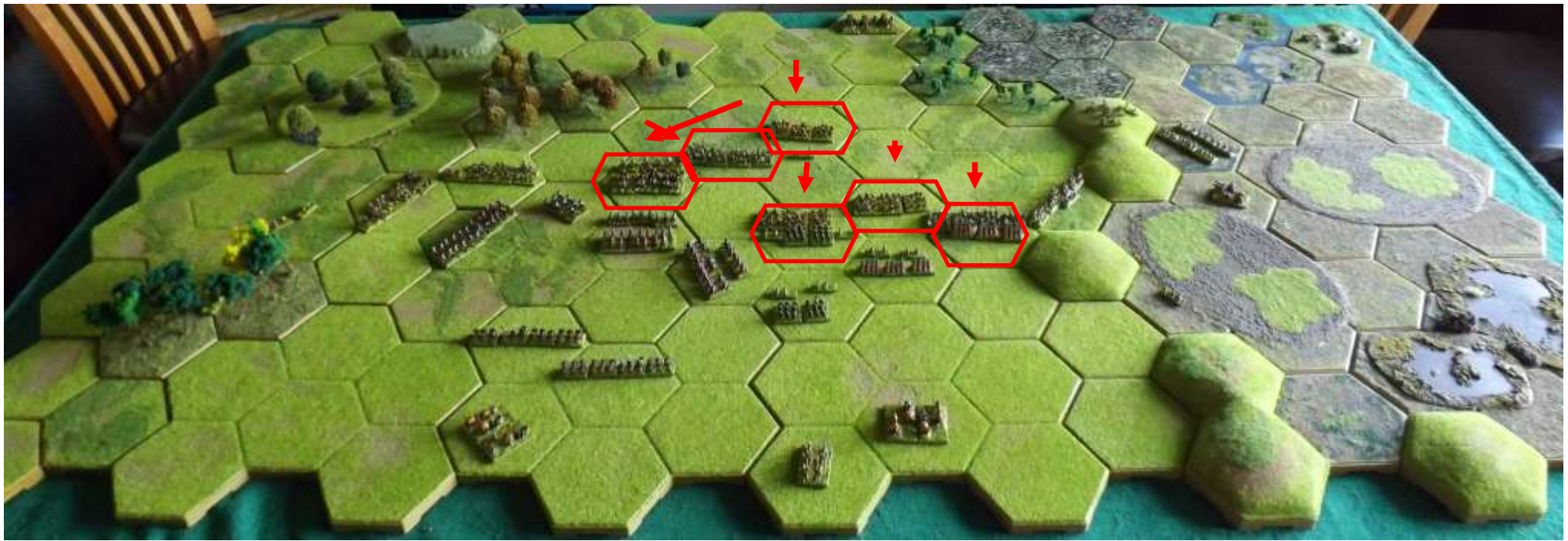
P4/C9



With Caratacus' men effectively taking the enemy flank, Dumnovellanunos was free to turn the Canonium clan inwards and threaten the enemy cavalry at the bottom of the ridge.



P4/C10



Cunobeline gave up any hope of trying to control his men and as they were now within melee range of the enemy, actively encouraged their eagerness. Two warbands charged into, and through, enemy infantry formations whilst he and his nobles skirmished with the enemy cavalry.



P4/C11



Feeling rather isolated and facing two strong enemy contingents, Xavier pulled his cavalry back to the security of the flank of his infantry.



P4/C12



Seeing that the enemy infantry were breaking through, Megabazos decided he had to act now whilst his troops were still sufficiently eager. He charged his own cavalry squadron into the Trinovante commander's chariots and ordered his other squadron to attack the weakened infantry that had been fighting the Armenians and his remaining infantry to attack the enemy to their front.



P5/C2



With his men in a wild state of enthusiasm, Cartivelios could not stop them from charging the nearest enemy. These were cavalry who sensibly evaded. However, Cartivelios, with his escort and the light cavalry from the Coastal clan were able to catch a few of the back markers before they rallied back to the safety of the rest of the clan.



P5/C3



Kawad, the Caspian chieftain, was down to a few of his close followers. There were also very few friends in his vicinity and the enemy seemed to be pushing forward. On this basis he determined that the situation was dire and ordered a withdrawal.



P5/C4



Caratacus had lost quite a few men in gaining control of the ridge, but with the allied clans advancing and the nearest enemy falling back, their morale was still good enough for him to push forward. He moved to the edge of the wood to keep on the enemy flank but held back from closing until the allied clans were in position to attack.



P5/C6



On the Persian right flank, Saumacus, the Chalybian king, was feeling rather isolated and ordered a withdrawal. But blocking his way was the rear of an enemy infantry block. With his men still eager he allowed them to charge the defenceless enemy, whilst he covered the rear in case the next enemy block tried that against his men.



P5/C7



Artaxias, the Armenian chieftain, assessed the situation as dire and ordered a retreat. His remaining infantry thought the situation was worse and broke in rout.



P5/C8



On the Trinovante left flank, Togodumnus' troops, despite their losses, were still in relatively good spirits mainly due to all the nearby enemy retiring. So, Togodumnus kept his men moving forward and his slingers tried a few long range shots from the top of the hill.



P5/C9



On the Trinovante right flank, the Canonium clan moved forward to support their allies in the Coastal clan.



P5/C10



The warband on the left of Cunobeline's line that had been caught in the rear had been destroyed, but the next warband in line charged in to avenge them. The Persian cavalry had proved tough opponents and both Cunobeline's nearly extinct nobles and the weakened warband pulled back. The other warbands moved forward, one charging some of the Persian cavalry who evaded.



P5/C11



Despite his cavalry and infantry still being at nearly full strength and in good morale, Xavier was concerned about the overall situation and ordered a withdrawal and started to adjust his line to enable this to happen safely with his infantry able to cover the fall back with archery.



P5/C12



With only the weakened cavalry squadrons left from his own satrapal troops and all his subject allies retiring, Megabazos had no option but to order a withdrawal too.



P6/C2



On the Trinovante right, the Coastal clan led the advance towards the remaining standing enemy.



P6/C3



On the Persian right flank, Kawad continued to withdraw with his few remaining Caspian archers.



P6/C4



On the Trinovante right flank, Caratacus held his men in position, awaiting the right moment to strike.



P6/C6



Saumacus, the Chalybian king, and his close escorts had done their job and prevented the rear attack from breaking through on his men. However, he had fallen. The morale of his men fell and they started to withdraw.



P6/C7



Whilst he was able to rally his infantry from rout, Artaxias, the Armenian chieftain, though the situation was dire and so continued with his withdrawal.



P6/C8



On the Trinovante left flank, Togodumnus kept his men moving forward.



P6/C9



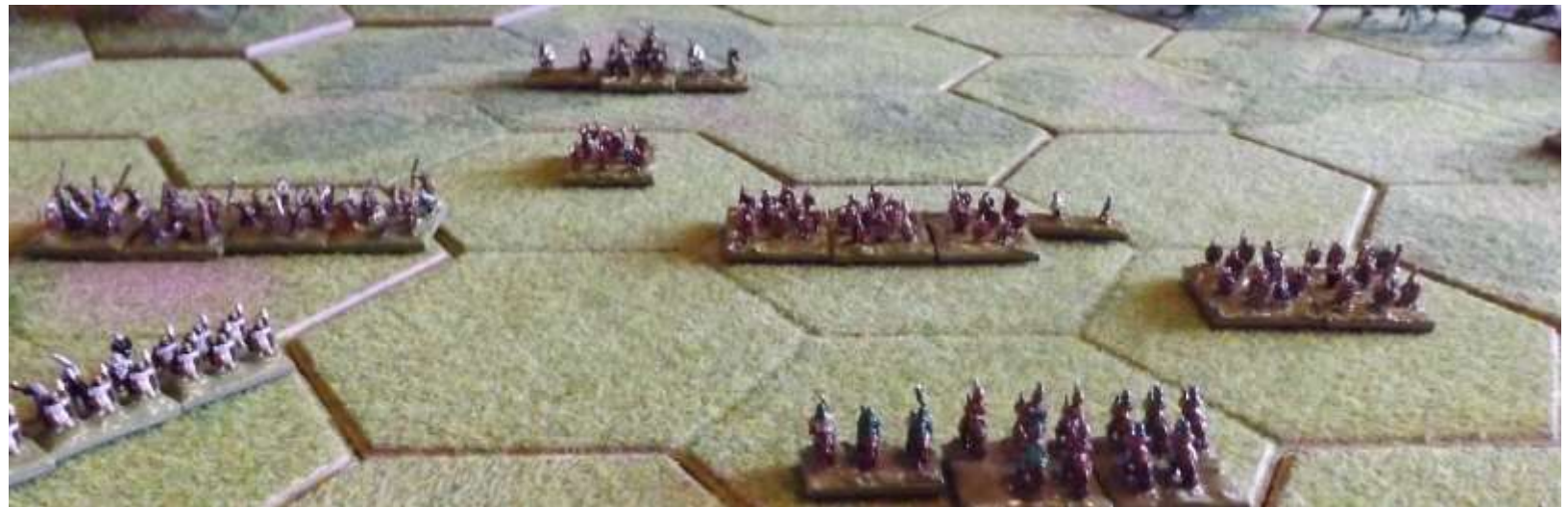
On the Trinovante right, the Canonium clan continued to close on the enemy.



P6/C10



In the Trinovante centre, Cunobeline re-grouped his three remaining robust warbands as they advanced.



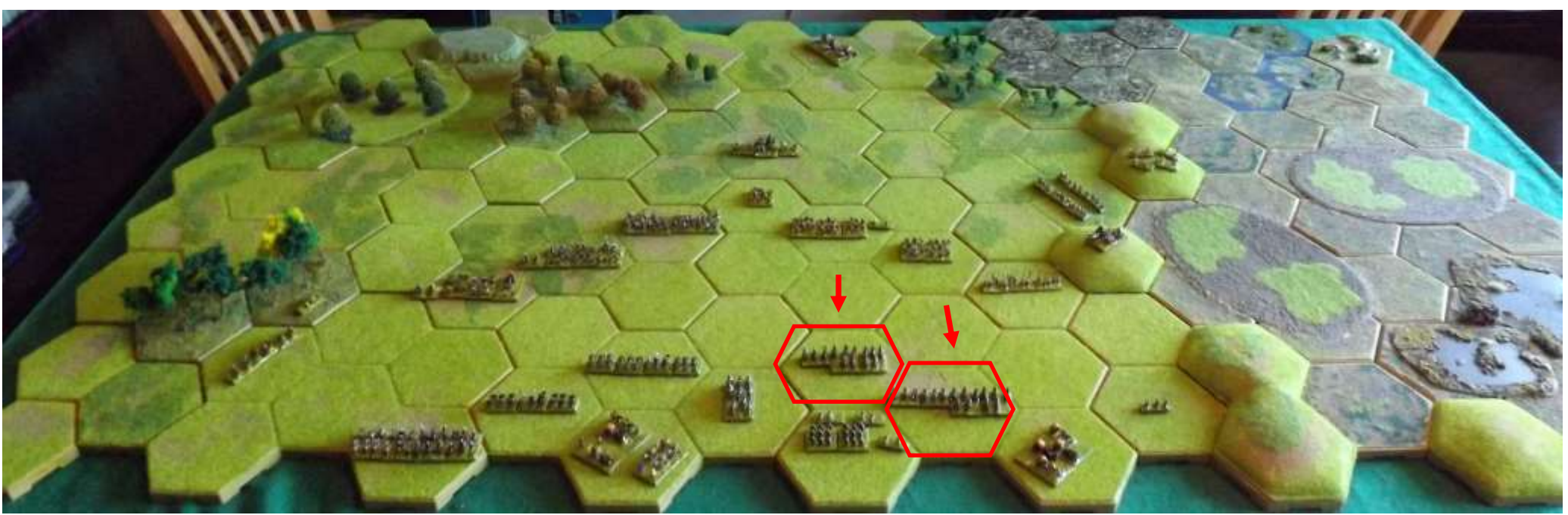
P6/C11



With lots of fresh and keen enemy advancing towards him, Xavier continued to pull his troops back in preparation for leaving the battlefield.



P6/C12



And this left Megabazos with little option but to continue with his withdrawal too.



The End

With all their remaining troops edging backwards and lots of the enemy still eagerly advancing towards them, the Persian satraps had no option but to call it a day and head for home.

So, Cunobeline and his Trinovantes had their revenge.



The Conclusions

Despite losing control of a lot of his army, Cunobeline managed to notch up another victory, that seemed quite easy although it could have been a lot closer. Both he and Togodumnus were very lucky to get out of their respective melees alive. If they had both fallen then the Trinovante morale might have reduced to a level where a ferocious advance might have disappeared. The layered attack on the right flank was probably a key element of his success as it stretched the enemy and forced an alteration to their plans.

Megabazos' concept was probably quite sound but poorly delivered. He would argue this was down to his suspect subject allies and his reluctant fellow satrap who all failed to commit fully. Potentially, if he had held his infantry back this would have given his cavalry more opportunity to weaken the enemy as they advanced. Deploying his better infantry (the Chalybians and the Longawayoff satrapal troops) more centrally and using them to lead the attack might also have improved his chances.

The most valuable Unit? There was no clear winner. Caratacus and Togodumnus may shout the glories of their own men in turning the flanks, but the first (and central) warband probably deserves the accolade. After being weakened by cavalry archery, it then took out one of the Armenian warbands (not a difficult task in itself) and then stood up to a cavalry charge. And at the end of the battle, despite being down to 25% strength, the remaining warriors were still steady enough to hold their place in the advancing line.